

Thomas Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, Albert Gallatin, and James Madison, February 28, 1806, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

CIRCULAR TO CABINET ON DEFENCE OF NEW ORLEANS J. MSS.

Feb. 28, 06.

What would you think of raising a force for the defence of New Orleans in this manner?¹
Give a

1 The following papers presumably relate to this matter:

“ Sketches of parts of a bill for encouraging settlers in the territory of Orleans.

“It shall be lawful for the Pr. of the U. S. to grant in fee simple a bounty of one quarter section of 160 a of any lands of the U. S. on the Western side of the Missisipi in the territory of Orleans when the same shall have been surveyed to every free able-bodied white male citizen of the U. S. who shall actually settle on the same in person within a time not exceeding one year to be prescribed by the Pr. U. S. who shall continue to reside on the same for the space of 7 years the next ensuing if he so long lives and who shall engage that if called on within the same term of 7 years he will render two years of military service as a regular souldier of the U. S. within the territory of Orleans or Misipi. or in the countries on their southern and western borders and on the regular conditions & emolumnts, of the regular souldiers of the U. S. Provided that the number of lots to be so granted shall not exceed [] thousand and provided also that on failure of any individual to perform substantially the conditions aforesaid his grant shall be forfeited.

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“It shall be the duty of the Surveyor General of lands of that territory to proceed forthwith to lay off such parts of the same as the Pr. U. S. shall direct into townships, and every other township alternately into sections & quarter sections; and every person entitled as aforesaid shall be free to chuse any one of the sd. quarter sections for his bounty as aforesaid to be granted to himself and to be in his immediate possession such choice to be made by the said persons in the order in which they shall have personally presented themselves at the office of the Surveyor Genl. on their arrival in the sd. territory, of which an entry shall be made and a certificate given to the party specifying the particular number which his entry bears in the numerical order from the first to the last presentment.

“It shall be lawful for the Pr. U. S. to employ proper persons in different parts of the U. S. to engage settlers as aforesaid and after they shall be inspected & received by the proper officer appd for ye purpose the same to conduct to the sd. territory of Orleans at the public expence & on such allowance as is usually made for conducting the regular troops of the U. S. And to grant a premium to the persons so employed in engaging & conducting the same at the rate of one section of 640 acres of lands for every 100 men actually passed by the Inspector and entered at the Office of the Surveyor General.

“And be it further enacted &c that there shall be granted a bounty of one quarter section containing 160 acres of any lands of the U. S. on the western side of the Missisipi in the territory of Orleans, in fee simple, to each of the said volunteers, being a free able bodied white male citizen, of some one of the *States* of the Union, of the age of 18 and under that of 35 years and accepted as such by an officer to be appointed for that purpose, who in addition to his engagement as a Volunteer shall undertake to settle on the said lands in person, within a term of months not exceeding twelve, to be prescribed by the President of the U. S. & shall actually settle and continue to reside thereon for the space of seven years then next ensuing, if so long he shall live, on the condition of forfeiture if he shall fail so to do. And every person so engaging shall be free to locate any quarter section not already located, of the said lands surveyed or to be surveyed, for his bounty aforesaid, to

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be granted to himself, & to be in his immediate occupation; such location to be made by the said persons in the order in which they shall have personally presented themselves at the office of the surveyor on their arrival in the sd. territory; of which an entry shall be made and a certificate given to the party specifying the particular number which his entry bears in the numerical order from the first to the last of those presented.”

“ *Notes on the Bill for the defence of Orleans.*

A. §. 1. 1. 10 two millions of acres will only provide for 6250 men if the alternate quarter sections be reserved. We ought to have 30,000 men at least there. That territory will never be invaded by an army of less than 15, or 20,000 men.

B. §. 2. 1. 3. 4. # ‘other than those of surveying expences & office fees’ many a man can carry an *able body* there (which is all we want) who could not carry surveying expences.

C. §. 2, 1. 6. 7. 8. # ‘and who was not &c—to Missisipi’ and instead thereof line 5, after ‘citizen’ insert ‘of some one.’ We should not weaken any of the territories; nor should we tempt the Creoles of Louisiana to remove to the lower government. They would strengthen the wrong party.

D. §. 2. 1. 13. # ‘and &c’—to the end of the section. I suggest this on the advice of others who say that the bug bear of military tenure will defeat the bill. If so let us have the men as mere militia, which they will be of course, without saying anything about it. I am doubtful.

E. §. 3. had not the whole of this section better be omitted. The people will certainly build themselves houses to live in & clear lands to make bread if they *actually reside* there: Unnecessary restrictions and forfeitures have a discouraging aspect.

§. 5. # the Proviso 1. 11. this depends on amendment D.

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F. §. 6. the utility of this section should be well considered. To permit a transfer to an able bodied man will often strengthen the settlement & in no case can weaken it. Interchanges which might gratify and benefit both parties would always be innocent.

these depend on amendment D.

§. 7. 1. 2. # 'the military services or.'

1. 15. # 'in case &c'—to 'on his part' 1. 23

§. 12. 1. 5. # 'such applicant &c'—to 'lands' 1. 11. a consequence of amendment B."

bounty of 50 acres of land, to be delivered immediately, to every able-bodied man who will immediately settle on it, & hold himself in readiness to perform 2 years military service (on the usual pay) if called on within the first seven years of his residence. The lands to be chosen by himself of any of those in the Orleans territory, on the west side of the Mississippi, actually surveyed & unsold, each to have his choice in the order of their arrival on the spot, a proclamation to be issued to this effect to engage as many as will go on & present themselves to the officer there; & moreover recruiting officers to be sent into different parts of the union to raise and conduct settlers at the public expense. When settled there, to be well trained as a militia by officers living among them.

A similar provision for Tombigbee.